

panel, and ad hoc reviewers, as required. Written comments will be solicited from ad hoc reviewers, when required, and individual written comments and in-depth discussions will be provided by peer review group members prior to recommending applications for funding. Applications will be ranked and support levels recommended within the limitation of total available funding for each research program area as announced in the applicable request for proposals.

(c) Except to the extent otherwise provided by law, such recommendations are advisory only and are not binding on program officers or on the awarding official.

§ 3401.17 Review criteria.

(a) Federally funded research supported under these provisions shall be

designed to, among other things, accomplish one or more of the following purposes:

(1) Improve management of rangelands as an integrated system and/or watershed;

(2) Remedy unstable or unsatisfactory rangeland conditions;

(3) Increase revegetation and/or rehabilitation of rangelands;

(4) Examine the health of rangelands; and

(5) Define economic parameters associated with rangelands.

(b) In carrying out its review under § 3401.16, the peer review panel will use the following form upon which the evaluation criteria to be used are enumerated, unless, pursuant to § 3401.7(a), different evaluation criteria are specified in the annual solicitation of proposals for a particular program:

PEER PANEL SCORING FORM

Proposal Identification No. _____
Institution and Project Title _____

I. Basic Requirement:

Proposal falls within guidelines? _____ Yes _____ No. If no, explain why proposal does not meet guidelines under comment section of this form.

II. Selection Criteria:

	Score 1–10	Weight factor	Score X weight factor	Comments
1. Overall scientific and technical quality of proposal		10		
2. Scientific and technical quality of the approach		10		
3. Relevance and importance of proposed research to solution of specific areas of inquiry		6		
4. Feasibility of attaining objectives; adequacy of professional training and experience, facilities and equipment		5		

Score _____
Summary Comments _____

(c) Proposals satisfactorily meeting the guidelines will be evaluated and scored by the peer review panel for each criterion utilizing a scale of 1 through 10. A score of one (1) will be considered low and a score of ten (10) will be considered high for each selection criterion. A weighted factor is used for each criterion.

PART 3402—FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES NATIONAL NEEDS GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP GRANTS PROGRAM

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AUTHORITY: 7 U.S.C. 3316.

SOURCE: 59 FR 68073, Dec. 30, 1994, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General Introduction

§ 3402.1 Applicability of regulations.

(a) The regulations of this part apply to competitive grants awarded under the provisions of section 1417(b)(6) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended, 7 U.S.C. 3152(b)(6). This statute designates the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as the lead Federal agency for agricultural research, extension, and teaching in the food and agricultural sciences. It authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture, who has delegated the authority to the

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), to make competitive grants to land-grant colleges and universities, colleges and universities having significant minority enrollments and a demonstrable capacity to carry out the teaching of food and agricultural sciences, and to other colleges and universities having a demonstrable capacity to carry out the teaching of food and agricultural sciences, to administer and conduct graduate fellowship programs to help meet the Nation's needs for development of scientific and professional expertise in the food and agricultural sciences. The fellowships are intended to encourage outstanding students to pursue and complete graduate degrees in the areas of food and agricultural sciences designated by CSREES through the Office of Higher Education Programs (HEP) as national needs.

(b) The regulations of this part do not apply to grants awarded by the Department of Agriculture under any other authority.

§ 3402.2 Definitions.

As used in this part:

Citizen or national of the United States means

(1) A citizen or native resident of a State; or,

(2) A person defined in the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(22), who, though not a citizen of the United States, owes permanent allegiance to the United States.

College and university means an educational institution in any State which

(1) Admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate,

(2) Is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education,

(3) Provides an educational program for which a bachelor's degree or any other higher degree is awarded,

(4) Is a public or other nonprofit institution, and

(5) Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association.

Food and agricultural sciences means basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching activities in the food, agricultural, renewable natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences in the broadest sense of these terms including but not limited to research, extension and teaching activities concerned with the production, processing, marketing, distribution, conservation, consumption, research, and development of food and agriculturally related products and services, inclusive of programs in agriculture, natural resources, aquaculture, forestry, veterinary medicine, home economics, rural development, and closely allied fields.

Graduate degree means a Master's or doctoral degree.

State means any one of the fifty States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the Virgin Islands of the United States, and the District of Columbia.

Teaching activities means formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience specific to the food and agricultural sciences and matters relating thereto conducted by colleges and universities offering baccalaureate or higher degrees.

§ 3402.3 Institutional eligibility.

Proposals may be submitted by land-grant colleges and universities, by colleges and universities having significant minority enrollments and a demonstrable capacity to carry out the teaching of food and agricultural sciences, and by other colleges and universities having a demonstrable capacity to carry out the teaching of food and agricultural sciences. All applicants should be institutions that confer a graduate degree in at least one area of the food and agricultural sciences targeted for national needs fellowships, that have a significant ongoing commitment to the food and agricultural sciences generally, and that have a significant ongoing commitment to the specific subject area for which a grant application is made. It is the objective to award grants to col-

leges and universities which have notable teaching and research competencies in the food and agricultural sciences. The grants are specifically intended to support fellowship programs that encourage outstanding students to pursue and complete a graduate degree at such institutions in an area of the food and agricultural sciences for which there is a national need for the development of scientific and professional expertise. Therefore, institutions which currently have excellent programs of graduate study and research in the food and agricultural sciences dealing with targeted national needs are particularly encouraged to apply.

Subpart B—Program Description

§ 3402.4 Food and agricultural sciences areas targeted for national needs graduate fellowship grants support.

Areas of the food and agricultural sciences appropriate for fellowship grant applications are those in which developing shortages of expertise have been determined and targeted by HEP for national needs fellowship grant support. When funds are available and HEP determines that a new competition is warranted, the specific areas and funds per area will be identified in a FEDERAL REGISTER notice announcing the program and soliciting program applications.

§ 3402.5 Overview of National Needs Graduate Fellowship Grants Program.

(a) The program will provide funds for a limited number of grants to support fixed graduate student stipends and fixed cost-of-education institutional allowances. These grants will be awarded competitively to eligible institutions. In order to encourage the development of special activities that are expected to contribute to Fellows' advanced degree objectives, the program will also provide competitive, special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowances for a limited number of USDA Graduate Fellows.

(b) Based on the amount of funds appropriated in any fiscal year, HEP will determine:

(1) Whether new competitions for graduate fellowships and/or special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowances will be held during that fiscal year;

(2) The graduate degree level(s) to be supported—Master’s and/or doctoral;

(3) The proportion of appropriations to be targeted for the fellowship stipends for each respective graduate degree level supported;

(4) The proportion of appropriations to be targeted for the cost-of-education institutional allowances for each respective graduate degree level supported;

(5) The proportion of appropriations to be targeted for the special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowances for each respective graduate degree level supported;

(6) The allowable stipend amount for each respective graduate degree level supported, the cost-of-education institutional allowance for each respective graduate degree level supported, and the maximum funds available for each special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance for each respective graduate degree level supported; and

(7) The maximum total funds that may be awarded to an institution under the program in a given fiscal year.

(c) HEP will also determine:

(1) The maximum number of national needs areas for which funding may be requested in a single proposal;

(2) The degree levels for which funding may be requested in a single proposal;

(3) The minimum and maximum number of fellowships for which an institution may apply in a single proposal; and

(4) The limits on the total number of proposals that can be submitted by an institution, college, school, or other administrative unit.

(d) All of these determinations will be published as a part of the program announcement in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(e) For each USDA Graduate Fellow who desires to be considered for a special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance,

the project director must apply to HEP for a supplemental grant in accordance with instructions published in the program announcement in the FEDERAL REGISTER. Each application must include an “Application for Funding” (Form CSRS-661) and a “Budget” (Form CSRS-55).

(1) To provide HEP with sufficient information upon which to evaluate the merits of the requests for a special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance, each application for a supplemental grant must contain a narrative which provides the following:

(i) The specific destination(s) and duration of the travel;

(ii) The specific study or thesis/dissertation research activities in which the Fellow will be engaged;

(iii) How the international experience will contribute to the Fellow’s program of study;

(iv) A budget narrative specifying and justifying the dollar amount requested for the travel;

(v) Summary credentials of the faculty or other professionals with whom the Fellow will be working during the international experience (summary credentials must not exceed three pages per person; “Summary Vita—Teaching Proposal” (Form CSRS-708) may be used for this purpose);

(vi) A letter from the dean of the Fellow’s college or equivalent administrative unit supporting the Fellow’s travel request and certifying that the travel experience will not jeopardize the Fellow’s satisfactory programs toward degree completion; and

(vii) A letter from the fellowship grant project director certifying the Fellow’s eligibility, the accuracy of the Fellow’s travel request, and the relevance of the travel to the Fellow’s advanced degree objectives.

(2) The narrative portion of the application must not exceed 10 pages, excluding the summary vita/vitae.

(f) All complete requests will be evaluated by professional staff from USDA or other Federal agencies, as appropriate. Evaluation criteria will be published in the program announcement in the FEDERAL REGISTER. Awards will be made to the extent possible based on availability of funds.

(g) Any current fellow with sufficient time to complete the international experience before the termination date of the grant under which he/she is supported is eligible for a special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance. Before the international study or thesis/dissertation research travel may commence, a Fellow must have completed one academic year of full-time study, as defined by the institution, under the fellowship appointment and arrangements must have been formalized for the Fellow to study and/or conduct research in the foreign location(s).

§ 3402.6 Fellowship appointments.

(a)(1) Fellows must be identified and fellowships must be awarded within 15 months of the effective date of a grant. Institutions failing to meet this deadline will be required to refund monies associated with any unawarded fellowship(s). Fellowship appointments may be held only by persons who enroll and pursue full-time study in a graduate degree program in the national need area and at the degree level supported by the grant.

(2) In addition, fellows:

- (i) must be newly recruited;
- (ii) must not have been enrolled previously in the academic program at the same degree level;
- (iii) must be citizens of nationals of the United States as determined in accordance with Federal law; and
- (iv) must have strong interest, as judged by the institution, in pursuing a degree in a targeted national need area and in preparing for a career as a food or agricultural scientist or professional.

(3) It will be the responsibility of the grantee institution to award fellowships to students of superior academic ability.

(4) A doctoral Fellow who maintains satisfactory progress in his or her course of study is eligible for support for a maximum of 36 months within a 45-month period. Master's level Fellows, maintaining satisfactory progress, are eligible for support for a maximum of 24 months during a 33-month period. However, it is the intent of this program that Fellows pursue full-time uninterrupted study or thesis/

dissertation research, including time spent pursuing USDA-funded special international study or thesis/dissertation research activities. For Fellows requiring additional time to complete a degree, it is expected that the institution will endeavor to continue supporting individuals originally appointed to fellowships through such other institutional means as teaching assistantships and research assistantships. For Fellows who complete the program of study early (less than 24 hours for Master's degree or 36 months for doctoral degree), the institution must refund any unexpended monies to the granting agency.

(b) Within the framework of the regulations in this part, all decisions with respect to the appointment of Fellows will be made by the institution. However, institutions are urged to take maximum advantage of opportunities for awarding fellowships to members of underrepresented groups at the graduate level in the food and agricultural sciences, particularly minorities and women. Throughout a Fellow's tenure, the institution should satisfy itself that the Fellow is making satisfactory academic progress, and carrying out, or planning to carry out, national needs related research. If an institution finds it necessary to terminate support of a Fellow for insufficient academic progress or by decision on the part of the Fellow, the Fellow becomes ineligible for future assistance under the program. If a Fellow finds it necessary to interrupt his or her program of study because of health, personal reasons, outside employment, or acceptance of an assistantship, the institution must reserve the funds for the purpose of allowing the Fellow to resume funded study any time within a 9-month period. However, a Fellow who finds it necessary to interrupt his or her program of study more than one time cannot exceed a total of 9 months' cumulative leave status without forfeiting eligibility. For fellowships terminated because of insufficient academic progress, a decision on the part of the Fellow, or reserved due to an interrupted program of study but not resumed within the required time period, unexpended monies must be refunded. Institutions may not use unexpended

monies associated with a terminated fellowship to recruit and support a “re-placement” Fellow.

(c) Only Fellows enrolled in Master’s programs of study may be supported under a Master’s fellowship grant. Only Fellows enrolled in doctoral programs of study may be supported under a doctoral fellowship grant.

§ 3402.7 Fellowship activities.

A Fellow must be enrolled as a full-time graduate student, as defined by the institution, at all times during the tenure of the fellowship in the national need area and at the degree level supported by the grant. This includes the time used for special international study or thesis/dissertation research if the international travel is funded through a special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance under this grant program. However, the normal requirement of formal registration during part of this tenure may be waived if permitted by the policy of the fellowship institution, provided that the fellow is making satisfactory progress toward degree completion and remains engaged in appropriate full-time fellowship activities such as thesis/dissertation research. Fellows in academic institutions are not entitled to vacations as such. They are entitled to the short normal student holidays observed by the institution. The time between academic semesters or quarters is to be utilized as an active part of the grant period. During the period of support, a Fellow may not accept employment by the institution or any other agency. However, a grant supporting research costs of the Fellow is acceptable, exclusive of salary or wages and fringe benefits for the Fellow.

§ 3402.8 Financial provisions.

The basis fellowship stipend, cost-of-education institutional allowance, and special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance that may be paid from grant funds will be determined by HEP contingent upon appropriations. The amount of the stipend, cost-of-education institution allowance, and special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowance will be cited in the

program announcement in the FEDERAL REGISTER. An institution may elect to apply the cost-of-education institutional allowance to a Fellow’s tuition and fees; however, such is not required. The allowance also may be used by an institution to defray other program expenses (e.g., recruitment, travel, publications, or salaries of project personnel). Tuition and fees are the responsibility of the Fellow unless an institution elects to use its cost-of-education institutional allowance for this purpose or elects to pay such costs out of other non-USDA monies. No dependency allowances are provided for Fellows. Stipend payments and special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowances will be made to Fellows by the institution, according to standard institutional procedures for fellowships and assistantships.

Subpart C—Preparation of a Proposal

§ 3402.9 Application package.

An application package will be made available to any potential grant applicant upon request. This package will include all necessary forms and instructions to apply for a grant under this program. The package also includes the regulatory provisions applicable to the program.

§ 3402.10 Proposal cover page.

The Proposal Cover Page, Form CSRS 701, must be completed in its entirety including all authorizing signatures. One copy of each grant application must contain the original pen-and-ink signature of:

- (a) The Project Director(s);
- (b) The Authorized Certifying Representative for the college or equivalent administrative unit; and
- (c) The Authorized Certifying Representative for the institution.

§ 3402.11 National need summary.

Using the National Need Summary, Form CSRS-702, applicants must summarize the proposed graduate program of study and the academic and research strengths of the institution in the national need area for which funding is

requested. To the extent possible, applicants should emphasize the uniqueness of the proposed graduate program of study. The summary should not include any reference to the specific number of fellowships requested. The information on the summary page will be used in assigning the most appropriate panelists to review a proposal. If a proposal is supported, this page may be used in program publications.

§3402.12 National need narrative.

A narrative for the national need area should be written in five sections limited to no more than 20 pages, and preceded by a table of contents. The table of contents is not considered part of the 20-page limitation. The narrative should be typed on one side of the page only, using a font no smaller than 12 point, and double-spaced. The five sections to be included in the narrative are as follows:

Sec. 1. In this section, applicants should establish clearly that the proposed program of study and research will result in the development of outstanding expertise in the national need area for which funding is requested and will do so in a reasonable period of time. Applicants should present a detailed description of the proposed graduate program of study and research. This section of the narrative should contain, but need not be limited to, the following components:

(a) The plan should specifically address the course work which Fellows will be required to take rather than the overall spectrum of departmental offerings. Identify courses, summarize content, and discuss sequencing. Explain how course work will relate to Fellows' research.

(b) Identify and describe areas of research that Fellows will be encouraged to engage in via a thesis or dissertation.

(c) Discuss graduate program examination requirements, such as a proficiency or qualifying examination, a comprehensive examination, and an oral examination.

(d) Include a projected timetable for completing the proposed graduate program of study and research.

(e) If admission to a proposed doctoral program does not require a Master's degree, discuss how institutional procedures allow for the bypass of a Master's degree.

Sec. 2. In this section, applicants should highlight thoroughly any special features of the graduate program such as the extent to which it will involve an inter-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary, or cross-disciplinary approach resulting in the development of expertise transcending a single discipline. Ap-

plicants should also discuss any other special features such as development of an unusual collateral specialization in a related discipline, experiential learning opportunities such as practicums or internships, unique mentoring programs, seminars, or a multi-university collaborative approach.

Sec. 3. In this section, applicants should substantiate clearly the institution's position that it presently provides a major, productive, and recognized program of graduate study and research at the level(s) of study in the area of national need in which selected Fellows would be engaged. Applicants should include evidence of the quality of existing academic attributes and resources of the institution such as teaching and research faculty, instructional and research instrumentation and facilities, library resources, computing resources, and other such indicators of academic quality. Also, applicants should discuss the extent to which graduate students have access to such institutional resources.

Sec. 4. In this section, applicants should document thoroughly the institution's plans and procedures for managing fellowship appointments. Applicants should explain in-depth the plan for recruiting academically outstanding Fellows and procedures for selecting Fellows of superior quality who appear to be highly motivated to prepare for and pursue a career as a food or agricultural scientist or professional. In addition, applicants should cite specific plans for advising and guiding Fellows through a program of study, as well as any special programs or activities that will be offered to enrich the Fellows' graduate study. Particular attention should be given to the plans and procedures for recruiting and retaining members of underrepresented groups.

Sec. 5. In this section, applicants should include important supplementary summary data for the institution relevant to the national need area for which funding is requested. Examples of appropriate data are indices of student quality, enrollments and degrees awarded for recent years, placement of graduates, facilities, faculty research support, and publications of previous graduate students. To the extent possible, applicants should present the supplementary summary data in tabular form.

§3402.13 Budget.

Applicants must prepare the Proposal Budget, Form CSRS-703, identifying all costs associated with the proposal. Instructions for completing the "Proposal Budget" are provided on the form. Pagination for the budget page should be continuous following the national need narrative and so indicated in the table of contents.

§ 3402.14 Faculty vitae.

This section should include a Summary Vita, Form CSRS-708, for each faculty member contributing significantly to institutional competence at the level of graduate study for the national area addressed in the proposal. Applicants should arrange the faculty vitae with the project director(s) first, followed by the remaining faculty, in alphabetical order. Pagination for the faculty vitae should be continuous following the budget page and so indicated in the table of contents.

§ 3402.15 Appendix.

Any additional supporting information deemed essential for clarifying and/or strengthening the proposal should be included in an Appendix and referenced in the national need narrative. To the extent possible, applicants should present supporting information included in the Appendix in tabular form. Pagination for the Appendix should be continuous following the faculty vitae and so indicated in the table of contents.

Subpart D—Submission of a Proposal

§ 3402.16 Intent to submit a proposal.

To assist HEP in preparing for review of fellowship proposals, institutions planning to submit proposals for fellowships may be requested to complete and return an Intent to Submit a Proposal form (Form CSRS-706). When required, applicants should complete and return one form for each proposal they anticipate submitting. Sending this form does not commit an institution to any course of action. The program an-

nouncement published in the FEDERAL REGISTER will delineate if, when, and where the Intent to Submit a Proposal Forms should be sent.

§ 3402.17 Where to submit a proposal.

The program announcement published in the FEDERAL REGISTER will delineate the date for submission of proposals and the number of proposal copies required to apply for a grant. In addition, the program announcement will provide the address to which the proposal, its accompanying duplicate copies, and the institution's latest graduate catalog should be mailed.

Subpart E—Proposal Review and Evaluation

§ 3402.18 Proposal review.

The proposal evaluation process includes both USDA internal staff review and merit evaluation by panels of scientists, educators, industrialists, and Government officials who are highly qualified to render expert advice in the targeted areas. The goal of the process of selection and structuring of evaluation panels is to provide optimum expertise and objective judgment in the evaluation of proposals specific to a particular area of national need.

§ 3402.19 Evaluation criteria.

Proposals addressing a particular national need area at a particular degree level will be evaluated in competition with other proposals addressing the same national need area at the same degree level. Both USDA internal staff and the panelists will evaluate proposals primarily on the basis of the following criteria:

Evaluation criterion	Weight
a. The degree to which the proposal establishes clearly that the proposed program of graduate study will result in the development of outstanding scientific/professional expertise related to the national need area and will do so in a reasonable period of time.	30 points.
b. The degree to which the proposal highlights thoroughly any special features such as an inter-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary, or cross-disciplinary approach, an unusual collateral specialization in a related discipline, experiential learning opportunities, unique mentoring programs, seminars, or a multi-university collaborative approach.	10 points.
c. The degree to which the proposal substantiates clearly that the institution's faculty, facilities and equipment, instructional support resources, and other academic attributes are excellent for providing outstanding graduate study and research at the forefront of science and technology related to the chosen area of national need.	20 points.
d. The degree to which the institution's plans and procedures for recruiting and selecting academically outstanding Fellows and for advising and guiding Fellows through a program of study reflect excellence as documented in the proposal.	20 points.

Evaluation criterion	Weight
e. The degree to which supplementary summary data substantiate program quality in the targeted national need area.	10 points.
f. The quality of the proposal as reflected by its substantive content, organization, clarity, and accuracy	10 points.

Additional or amended evaluation criteria and new point weightings may be cited in the program announcement published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

Subpart F—Supplementary Information

§ 3402.20 Terms and conditions of grant awards.

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official shall make project grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose proposals are judged most meritorious in the announced program areas under the evaluation criteria and procedures set forth in this part. The beginning of the project period shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support. All funds granted under this part shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations of this part, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations (7 CFR Part 3015).

§ 3402.21 Grant awards.

(a) The grant award document shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization.
- (2) Title of project.
- (3) Name(s) and address(es) of Project Director(s).
- (4) Identifying grant number assigned by the Department.
- (5) Project period, which specifies how long the Department intends to support the effort without requiring re-application for funds.
- (6) Total amount of Federal financial assistance approved during the project period.
- (7) Legal authority under which the grant is awarded.

(8) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the grant award.

(9) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by the Department to carry out its granting activities or to accomplish the purpose of this particular project grant.

(b) The notice of grant award, in the form of a letter, will provide pertinent instructions and information to the grantee that are not included in the grant award document described above.

(c) The major types of grant instruments shall be as follows:

(1) New grant. This is a grant instrument by which HEP agrees to support a specified number of graduate Fellows at a specific institution via funds for fixed graduate student stipends and fixed cost-of-education institutional allowances. This type of grant is approved on the basis of peer review recommendation.

(2) Supplemental grant. This is an instrument by which HEP agrees to provide additional funding under a new grant as specified in paragraph (c)(1) of this section to provide special international study or thesis/dissertation research travel allowances for graduate Fellows. This type of grant will not require additional peer review.

§ 3402.22 Other Federal statutes and regulations that apply.

Several other Federal regulations or statutes apply to project grants awarded under this part. These include but are not limited to:

7 CFR Part 1.1—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.

7 CFR Part 15, Subpart A—USDA implementation of Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, as amended, implementing OMB directives (i.e., Circular Nos.

§ 3402.23

A-110 and A-21), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR Part 3017, as amended—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants), as amended.

7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of New Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes new prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3051—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133 regarding audits of institutions of higher education and other nonprofit institutions.

7 CFR Part 3407—CSREES implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act.

29 U.S.C. 794, Section 504—Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute), prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 *et seq.*—Bayh-Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

§ 3402.23 Confidential aspects of proposals and awards.

When a proposal results in a grant, it becomes a part of the record of the Agency's transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Agency and the grantee mutually agree to be of a privileged nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as privileged should be clearly marked as such and sent in a separate statement, two copies of which should accompany the proposal. The original copy of a proposal that does not result in a grant will be retained by the Agency for a period of one year. Other copies will be destroyed. Such a proposal will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. A proposal may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

§ 3402.24 Access to peer review information.

After final decisions have been announced, HEP will, upon request, in-

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form the project director of the reasons for its decision on a proposal. Verbatim copies of summary reviews, not including the identity of the reviewers, will be made available to respective project directors upon specific request.

§ 3402.25 Documentation of progress on funded projects.

(a) A Fellowship Appointment Documentation form (Form CSRS-707) is included in the application package. Upon request by HEP, project directors awarded grants under the program will be required to complete and submit this form. Follow-up progress reports will focus on assessing continuing progress of Fellows through their graduate programs of study (including activities supported by any special international study or thesis/dissertation research allowance) and on institution adherence to program guidelines.

(b) A Graduate Fellow Exit Report (Form CSRS-709) is included in the application package. This form should be completed and submitted to HEP by the project director for each Fellow supported by a grant as soon as a Fellow either: graduates; is officially terminated from the fellowship or the academic program due to unsatisfactory academic progress; or voluntarily withdraws from the fellowship or the academic program. If a Fellow has not completed all degree requirements at the end of the five-year grant duration, HEP may request a preliminary exit report. In such a case, a final exit report will be required at a later date. When a final exit report for each Fellow supported by a grant has been accepted by USDA, the grantee institution will have satisfied the requirement of a final performance report for the grant. Additional follow-up reports to track the Fellows' career patterns may be requested.

(c) A Final Report must be completed and returned within 90 days after the expiration date of the project. The Final Report must be submitted to the program contact person and must contain proper data and information as specified in the "Special Terms and Conditions" of the award. Generally, the Final Report should include a summary of: recruitment strategies that were effective; successful mentoring

procedures or activities; enrichment activities the fellows were afforded; barriers faced in recruiting and graduating fellows; and the impact of the fellowship grant on the overall quality of the educational programs of the institution.

§ 3402.26 Evaluation of program.

Grantees should be aware that HEP may, as a part of its own program evaluation activities, carry out in-depth evaluations of assisted activities through independent third parties. Thus, grantees should be prepared to cooperate with evaluators retained by HEP to analyze both the institutional context and the impact of any supported project.

PART 3403—SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAM

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AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 638.

SOURCE: 61 FR 25367, May 20, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General Information

§ 3403.1 Applicability of regulations.

(a) The regulations of this part apply to small business innovation research grants awarded under the general authority of section 630 of the Act making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies' programs for fiscal year ending September 30, 1987, and for other purposes, as made applicable by section 101(a) of Public Law 99-591, 100 Stat. 3341, and the provisions of the Small Business Innovation Development Act of 1982, as amended (15 U.S.C. 638). The Small Business Innovation Development Act of 1982, as amended, mandates that each Federal agency with an annual extramural budget for research or research and development in excess of \$100 million participate in a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program by reserving a statutory percentage of its annual extramural budget for award to small business concerns for research or research and development in order to stimulate technological innovation, use small business to meet Federal research and development needs, increase private sector commercialization of innovations derived from Federal research and development, and foster and encourage the participation of socially and economically disadvantaged small business concerns and women-owned small business concerns in technological innovation. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will participate in this program through the issuance of competitive research grants which will be administered by the Office of Competitive Research Grants and Awards Management, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES).

(b) The regulations of this part do not apply to research grants awarded by the Department of Agriculture under any other authority.

§ 3403.2 Definitions.

As used in this part:

Ad hoc reviewers means experts or consultants, qualified by training and